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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001726

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TAGS: PREL PGOV TU IZ
SUBJECT: TURKISH ENVOY ON GOT-KRG COOPERATION, KIRKUK
ELECTIONS PROPOSAL

REF: A. BAGHDAD 1720 (TALABANI ON KIRKUK)
 1B. BAGHDAD JUNE 3 OI AND PREVIOUS
 1C. ANKARA 971 (KIRKUK ELECTIONS PROPOSAL)

Classified By: Political Counselor Matt Tueller for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (S/NF) Summary: Turkish Special Envoy Murat Ozcelik told S/I Satterfield on June 4 that he is pleased with ongoing GOT-KRG talks and is currently in Baghdad finalizing arrangements for a possible July 3 visit to Baghdad by Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan. He also hoped to meet with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Masood Barzani when he next came to Baghdad, as a first step towards possible future meetings in the KRG. Ozcelik expressed some confidence that Kurdish leaders might ultimately support a proposal to have a special Kirkuk provision in the draft provincial elections law along power-sharing lines. Satterfield cautioned that the provision did not appear to have such support, and said we were concerned about this provision's negative effect on the ability to pass the elections law. Satterfield briefed Ozcelik on the state of play with the hydrocarbons package. End Summary.

Kirkuk Elections Proposal

12. (C) Turkish Special Envoy Murat Ozcelik told S/I Satterfield on June 4 that he is pleased with the recent talks with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, with whom he last spoke by phone on June 2 and last met in person in London on late May. On the proposal in the Council of Representatives to amend the draft elections law to include a provision for Kirkuk elections along a 32/32/32/4 percent split for the communities (Kurd, Arab, Turkmen, minorities), Ozcelik said that Nechirvan promised on June 2 that he would speak to KRG President Masood Barzani about the proposal. He said that the Kurds understand the importance of good relations with Turkey. Referring to the press quoting Nechirvan as saying in Dubai on June 3, "in Kirkuk, as Kurds, we are ready for power-sharing," Ozcelik said he thought it was a good comment and an indication that the Kurds may be amenable to the Kirkuk elections proposal. He stated that the GOT wanted to assure the USG that it has no intention of complicating overall priorities in Iraq with this proposal.

13. (C) Satterfield stressed that the U.S. is very pleased with the ongoing GOT-KRG dialogue, but cautioned that the U.S. is concerned that the Kirkuk elections proposal would not gain agreement from the Kurdish parties and would therefore stall the elections law, although the U.S. agrees that power-sharing in Kirkuk is a good idea. Ozcelik responded that Iraqi Vice President Adel Abdel Mehdi told him that the elections law would not be a matter of pure votes, it would require consensus. Ozcelik said that he viewed Nechirvan's public comment on power-sharing to mean a signal that he had talked to Masood about the elections proposal and gained his agreement. Satterfield said that it would be fine if that were true and agreement was reached among all parties

and an elections law passed with the provision, but that indications currently are that an agreement cannot be reached and that the Kurdish parties have threatened to leave the Council of Representatives if the provision is pushed through. Ozcelik said that the GOT had "no intention of jeopardizing anything" should events move in that direction.

PM Erdogan to Baghdad; GOT-KRG Talks

¶4. (S/NF) Ozcelik said he is meeting with GOI officials to finalize arrangements for the PM high committee on strategic cooperation between GOT and GOI and to discuss specific dates. He said that Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan planned to visit Baghdad on July 3. Ozcelik said he will meet with KRG President Masood Barzani when Masood comes to Baghdad for the SOFA/SF talks towards the end of June. Satterfield cautioned that the dates for the strategic talks were not set.

Economic Cooperation

¶5. (C) Another priority during this visit, Ozcelik said, was to discuss economic cooperation and investment, including on energy. He wants to finalize energy contracts with the KRG that would include language requiring the concurrence of the GOI and to stop waiting for the hydrocarbons law. Satterfield said that Nechirvan told him he was finalizing work on the hydrocarbons package of laws in the coming weeks and there could be significant movement this month on it. Satterfield requested that the GOT refrain from entering into

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any contracts that might have a negative impact on the ability to get the hydrocarbons package moved ahead.

Comment

¶6. (C) We believe that Ozcelik is overly optimistic about potential Kurdish support for the Kirkuk power-sharing elections provision, given our discussions with Kurdish CoR members (ref a) and President Talabani (ref b). We think Nechirvan made his comments on power-sharing in Kirkuk to both continue conditioning the Kurdish public to accept UNAMI's efforts and understand that a referendum will not happen soon and as part of efforts by the KRG to continue confidence building comments with the GOT. End Comment.
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